

Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3871

“get real. get maine!”

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products. **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, 368-4433
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public's interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 29 prospects in Kennebec County. Freedom, **382-3255**

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)**, **USDA Farm Service Agency** and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS-Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Augusta, **622-7847, EXT 3**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine, with offices statewide. Augusta, **800-287-1481** or statewide **800-287-0274**.

Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
www.maine.gov/argiculture/

“get real. get maine!”
www.getrealmaine.com

Maine State Web Portal
www.maine.gov

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide
www.getrealmaine.com/connect/

References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
Maine Revenue Service

Kennebec County



2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Kennebec County.

Farmers in Kennebec County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	355	379	286	263	248
Male Operators (N)	NA	565	535	446	399
Female Operators (N)	NA	40	35	48	56
Average Age	52	49	50	53	55

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

Kennebec County Farmland

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of farms	559	605	573	455	494
Total Acres (A)	122,752	119,957	117,547	95,402	88,134
Average Farm Size (A)	220	198	205	193	194
Total Cropland (A)	49,921	54,236	52,503	48,273	44,591
Total Pasture (A)	NA	21,992	22,933	14,719	15,136
Total Orchard (A)	1,304	1,045	1,175	836	665
Total Berry (A)	84	120	NA	NA	135
Total Hay (A)	27,989	32,765	32,945	31,546	30,484
Total Woodland (A)	54,813	53,637	52,036	40,557	35,908

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Land in farms decreased 8 percent from 95,402 acres in 1992 to 88,134 acres in 1997.



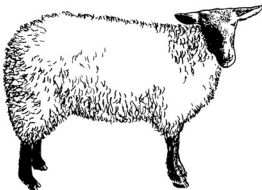
November
2003

Unique to Kennebec County

- There are 10 granges in the county. **County Grange**, Valmore Dunn, Master, 293-2330.
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau**, President, Frances Hale, Windsor, 445-5712
- **“Explore Kennebec County Food and Farms”** a farm and farmstand map sponsored by Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District, 622-7847 ext. 3
- **Land Trust Organizations**

Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (founded 1988) 495-6039; *Kennebec Land Trust* (1989) 377-2848

- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county’s agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Farmland Protected in Kennebec County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- 189 acres (1 farm) has been protected by the Land for Maine’s Future Program and the USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

Maine Dept. of Agriculture

- 635 acres protected through Farms for the Future (5 years)

USDA Farm Service Agency

- 171 acres protected through Debt for Nature (50 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 16,772 acres farmland in 2002 — 8,614 acres cropland plus 8,158 acres woodland
- 1,243 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Tax Program

- 69,282 acres in 2001

Prime Soils in Kennebec County

PRIME FARMLAND

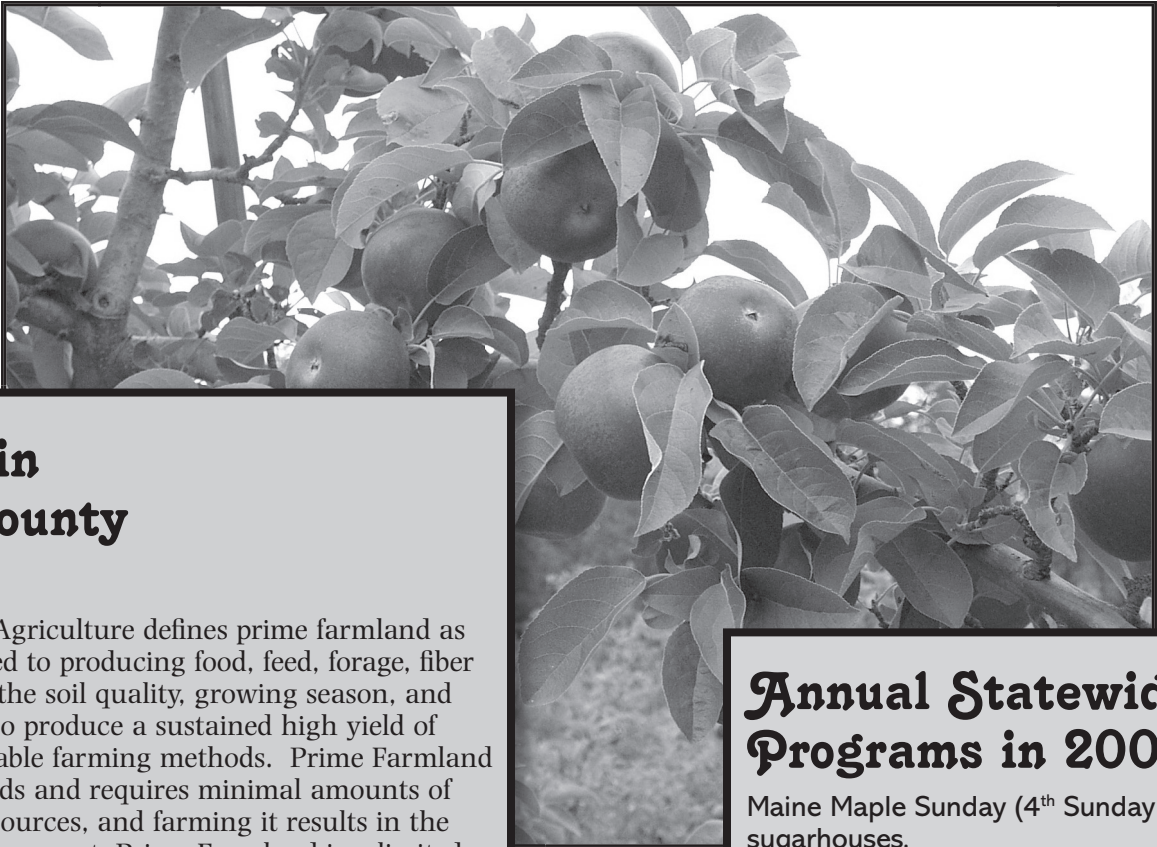
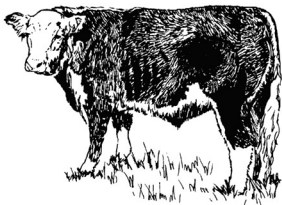
The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

39,443 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

56,089 acres (estimated)



Food, Farms* and Fairs in Kennebec County

- 68 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public
- 6 Farmers’ Markets serving multiple communities
- 3 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 19 Farms offer Pick-Your-Own fruits and vegetables
- 19 Farms host special on-farm events and activities such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs
- 5 Agricultural Fairs (Clinton, Litchfield, Monmouth, Pittston and Windsor) drew up to 173,880 people in 2002

** Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*



Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

Maine Maple Sunday (4th Sunday in March) 5 farms opened their sugarhouses.

Open Farm Day (4th Sunday in July) 8 farms welcomed the public onto their farms.

Maine Menus Month (October) 5 restaurants made special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Great Maine Apple Day (November) many farms celebrated Maine’s apple harvest.

Maine Senior Farm Share assisted 15 farmers with providing locally grown produce to 630 low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.

The average per farm market value of agricultural products sold increased 34 percent from \$73,973 in 1992 to \$99,299 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed that 89 percent surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine’s economy.

Kennebec County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$2,573,000	\$3,264,000	\$5,131,000	\$5,329,000	\$6,175,000
Livestock/poultry and products	\$39,239,000	\$45,564,000	\$29,014,000	\$31,213,000	\$39,006,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$198,000	\$396,000	\$991,000	\$1,611,000	\$2,480,000
Fruits, Nut and Berries	NA	\$1,885,000	\$3,298,000	\$2,158,000	\$1,979,000

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*